

HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

EXCLUSIVE REPORTS

Companies are on the road to change

Houston is the first city in Texas and the third in the U.S. to launch a program recognizing companies that provide benefits to employees for commuting alternatives.

Thirty Houston companies were honored this week for providing commuter benefits to more than 65,000 employees.

The Best Workplaces for Commuters program was initiated last year by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and is backed up by local sponsors in Houston.

To qualify, businesses must provide at least one primary benefit -- such as tax-free transit -- plus three secondary benefits, such as telecommuting, compressed work schedules, preferred or reduced-cost parking for carpools or vanpools.

These kinds of commuting alternatives were being developed and implemented in the early 1990s under a provision of the Clean Air Act known as Employer Trip Reduction. The provision required businesses with more than a minimum number of employees to implement such practices in order to reduce air pollution. But the requirement was dropped in the mid-1990s, and the commuter initiatives died.

Houston remains out of compliance with clean air standards and is one of the most congested urban areas in the country, with commuters spending an estimated 75 hours a year stuck in traffic.

A listing of the Houston companies recognized this week is available at www.commuterchoice.gov.

Monica Perin

© 2003 American City Business Journals Inc.

→ [Web reprint information](#)

All contents of this site © American City Business Journals Inc. All rights reserved.